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ABSTRACT

This brochure, part of a series about good practices in vocational training in the European Union, describes 10 projects that have promoted investment in human resources through training in the tourism sector to promote sustainable, or responsible, tourism. The projects and their countries of origin are as follows: (1) BEEFT, training of mobility planners for seasonal tourism in France; (2) CHTN, cultural heritage tourism network in Cyprus; (3) ESOPE, enterprises and operational structures for employment in the "green" tourism sector in France; (4) ENIT, European niche for insertion in the tourism sector in Austria; (5) EDIT, employee development in tourism, which made a comparative study of policies and practices in the hotel industry; (6) Refalt, European training network for work-linked training in the tourism and leisure industry in France; (7) Simulturismo, development of methods and materials for the improvement of initial and continuing training in the tourism and catering sector in Italy; (8) Tourit, survey and action research in information and communication technology in tourism and hospitality management in the United Kingdom; (9) Verena, training for tourist guides in the context of regional cultural development in Austria; and (10) WIT, women in tourism in Greece. All project descriptions include contacts for more information. (MO)

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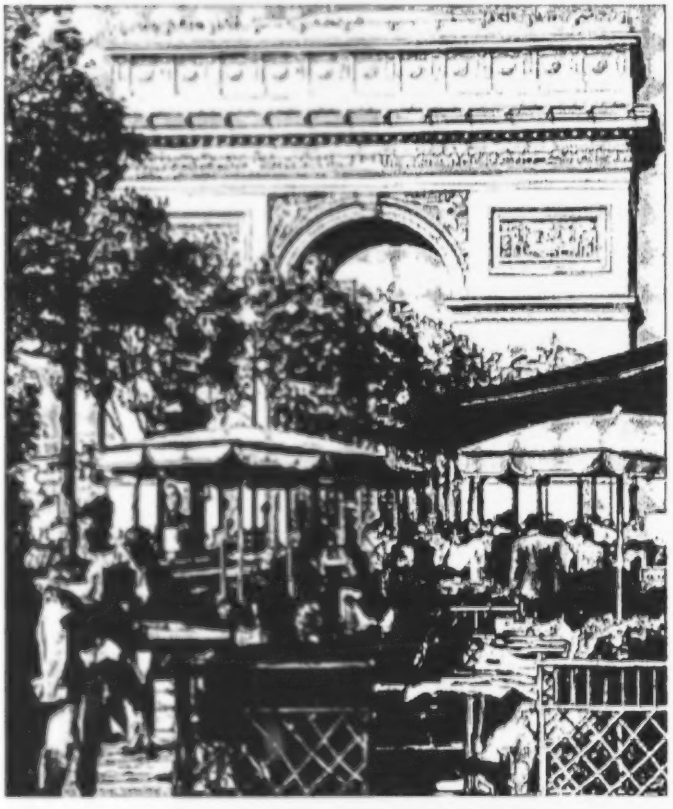
Leonardo da Vinci

Series: Good Practices ⑤

Tourism



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European Commission
Directorate-General for Education and Culture
Directorate-General for Enterprise

Tourism is a people-based service industry. More than in many other sectors, its competitiveness and quality depend on the over eight million people working in tourism throughout the European Union. Hence, the importance of good skills, learning and training for the future success of the sector and of every single tourism enterprise.

Tourism is a very diversified and complex industry, encompassing a wide range of economic activities and job profiles in every region and involving a substantial investment in a good workforce. Tourism is also one of the sectors of the European economy with the best outlook. Forecasts indicate continued steady growth of tourism in Europe, stronger than the average economic growth and normally exceeding an annual level of 3%. This will provide good prospects for further employment growth. In recent years 100 000 new jobs a year have been created in Europe in hotel and restaurant businesses alone.

In the light of these trends new emphasis is being laid on professionalism and standards in the tourism industry and on the development of new skills. Training needs in this sector are increasing, especially in the area of information and communication technology. High staff turnover is a problem and is directly related to both seasonal working conditions and the low status associated with the tourism sector in general. Although there is a demand for qualified employees, employers often find it difficult to recruit new staff because of a lack of qualified personnel. Many employers do not consider it a priority to invest in qualified seasonal staff.

Existing skills must be upgraded and skills must be developed to meet new demands in the tourism industry. Vocational training offers a vital tool for developing skilled labour in this sector. The Commission's communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, on enhancing tourism's potential for employment concluded that the upgrading of human resources in the tourism sector helps to improve competitiveness and employment opportunities. This was again reinforced by the Council conclusions on tourism and employment, which also highlighted the importance of improving training in this sector.

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The European Commission recognises the issue of upgrading the skills of those working in tourism as a key factor for making best use of the employment opportunities that the sector offers. It assists significant actions for training in tourism through several programmes. One of them is the Leonardo da Vinci programme phase I, which ran from 1995 to 1999. In this period there was around EUR 18 million of Community support for more than 80 projects involving more than 600 partners related to tourism. All good practices mentioned in this brochure reflect one or more of the five priorities of the Leonardo da Vinci programme: acquisition of new skills, forging closer links between educational and vocational training institutions and enterprises, combating exclusion, promoting investment in human resources and generalising access to skills through the information society in the context of lifelong learning.

It is with great pleasure that we present this brochure, the result of fruitful cooperation between the Directorate-General for Education and Culture and the Directorate-General for Enterprise. It contains examples of good practice in training in the tourism sector, which provide useful ideas and concepts for further initiative. We hope that tourism enterprises and all other stakeholders concerned will take them up and build on them in turn.

Viviane Reding
Member of the European Commission
in charge of Education and Culture

Erkki Liikanen
Member of the European Commission
in charge of Enterprise and the Information Society

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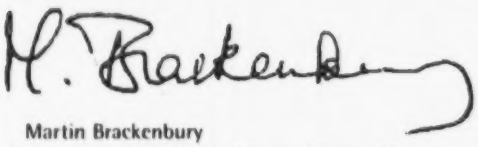
It is a pleasure to find 10 such diverse projects that so helpfully illustrate the different approaches and products that have proved useful in improving access to the world of tourism and high quality performance within it. In addition, there is the clear focus on increasing awareness of the social and economic value of tourism, while, at the same time, maintaining concern for the protection of the environment. This puts the results from these projects at the heart of improving best practice in tourism.

Sustainable tourism, or what we now often refer to as responsible tourism, has become the conceptual framework governing all the work we do. This should lead to more appropriate decisions being taken by the myriad of stakeholders in tourism that enable so many to enjoy the wonders of the world.



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This brochure, which is the result of a joint effort between Education and Culture DG and Enterprise DG, presents 10 projects that help to promote and upgrade the tourist industry. For further information on the Leonardo da Vinci programme, please consult the web site at

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/leonardo.html

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BEEFT

Training of mobility planners – Seasonal tourism (France – 1995)

The objective of this project was to develop innovative guidelines for planners and trainers responsible for the mobility of young seasonal workers in the tourist industry. The professional status of jobs in tourism was reinforced through the establishment of complementary qualifications spanning a number of European countries. The project also helped young European workers in this service industry learn more about the culture and history of other European countries. Such knowledge is vital for young people planning a career in a Europe without frontiers.

The project was designed by a French contractor, together with training organisations in Spain, France, Italy, Portugal, a Greek university, French and Belgian representatives of the social partners and a French company dealing in social tourism. Each partner was responsible for setting up a consortium in its own country, bringing together those responsible for employment and training, regional organisations and social partners. Their main task was to set up a European employment and training agency for seasonal workers in tourism. The main aim of this transnational structure was to give support to young people throughout their professional career.

This project helped young workers to move around Europe and find jobs in tourism. Armed with knowledge about the conditions of employment in Europe, as well as employment opportunities for seasonal workers in Europe, it was easier for them to find work. Likewise employers in this sector were better able to guide these young workers and assist them.

The project produced 'Album de voyage', a CD-ROM which gives a general presentation of the different countries of Europe and information about their history, geography, culture, and famous people, and the institutions of the European Union. A mobility guide for workers in the European Union is also available in five languages (Spanish, Greek, English, French and Italian). This guide is also available on the BEEFT online network.

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CHTN

Cultural heritage tourism network (Cyprus – 1997)

The importance of culture and heritage is becoming increasingly recognised by the tourist industry. The development of local crafts can provide employment in rural areas and contribute towards the regeneration of traditional occupations.

The CHTN project responded to the need for a vocational training programme that covers a range of professions including craft workers, owners of agrotourism enterprises, travel agents, local authorities, museum staff and architects. The CHTN objective was to develop and apply high-quality vocational education and training resources for a variety of small enterprises involved in cultural heritage and sustainable tourism. The project developed methods for needs analysis, training modules and curricula. It integrated training material into the curricula of vocational training institutions and established a European network of cultural tourism development. The partner countries (Cyprus, Greece, Ireland and Spain) represented SMEs, associations of special interest tourism and agrotourism, educational and vocational training institutions and public sector authorities interested in regional development. A common questionnaire was developed to analyse the current and future training needs of SME groups in all of the participating countries. As a result eight training themes were chosen:

- Marketing for cultural heritage tourism
- Traditional gastronomy
- SME business development skills
- Organisation of cultural events
- Cultural and heritage tourism
- Rural tourism
- Natural and cultural patrimony
- Traditional wineries – Oenology.

Each participating country was responsible for developing two themes. The training modules include theoretical material, case studies, group workshop activities and fieldwork. For example, traditional gastronomy covers the decoration of a taverna, food hygiene and traditional recipes. This module is based on two guidebooks entitled *Traditional gastronomy* and *Traditional recipes*.

Several publicity and dissemination activities took place at national and European level to present and disseminate the results of the project results.

This project has left its impact on vocational training in Europe. In Ireland the training modules produced are now part of the teaching curriculum of the vocational education committee for the county of Cork and are used in a number of courses. The modules are also used in University College, Cork, for students in programmes on rural development. In Greece, the district government of the Cycladic Islands has supported the linking of the CHTN with a 500-hour European Social Fund training project in Naxos entitled 'Alternative forms of tourism development'. In Tenerife, two of the training modules (Natural and cultural patrimony and Traditional wineries – Oenology) are being used by teachers at public vocational training institutions in the Canary Islands. In Cyprus, three other modules (SME business development skills, Traditional gastronomy and Organisation of cultural events) are being used by the Cyprus Agrotourism Company and cultural heritage SMEs.

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ESOPE

Enterprises and operational structures for employment in the 'green' tourism sector (France – 1997)

The creation of micro-companies in the tourism sector helps local development, especially if they act in synergy with the local environment. This project addressed the need for the creation of a network of small enterprises, mainly geared towards women and young people, to promote local employment in the fields of tourism and the environment. This project tried to help SMEs in the tourism field to become more professional and more able to link economic development with training strategies identified to fit in with the economic situation. The need for training, self-training and continuing and distance learning were also highlighted in this project.

The partner countries, France, Italy and Portugal, worked in close collaboration under the contractor's coordination. Local employment services, as well as public and private organisations from each region, also worked alongside the partnership. Esope was designed in three phases. The first phase was the creation of a network of micro-entrepreneurs. The second phase was the establishment of training needs to help enterprises become self-sufficient with the help of training organisations. The third phase, the training itself, was centred on three main themes. The first theme concerned sales and marketing techniques. The second theme dealt with cultural tourism, with modules focusing on environmental knowledge, the sociology of tourism and data processing. The third theme dealt with design, planning and skills acquisition, with a view to greater self-sufficiency.

Amongst the products resulting from this project are information manuals in French on the development of women's activities in green tourism, rural tourism and agrotourism, the creation of companies in Portugal, and a report on the research on the experimental teaching network in Marseille.

The partners in this project, France, Italy and Portugal, worked closely with employment services and public organisations in their respective regions. Seminars, conferences and meetings on the subject of equal opportunities, rural tourism and insertion in employment were also organised, together with regional and national actors. The project was presented in Ascoli, Italy in October 1999 and in Marseille, France in May and December 1999.

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ENIT

European niche for insertion in the tourism sector (Austria – 1997)

The objective of the ENIT project was to establish a manual of professional criteria, showing qualifications and skills for employers, workers and prospective workers in the tourist industry, as well as a reference guide to employment in the sector in a number of European countries. The project was also to develop a guide to the qualifications and skills recognised by the various partner States, namely Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Each partner country recognises that if SMEs in the tourist sector are to be competitive then they have to be flexible. Staff in the industry not only have to be qualified for their particular jobs, they also need complementary qualifications such as foreign languages, technical skills, knowledge of health and safety regulations and skills in customer relations. The project's main aim was to inform young people in tourism, such as cooks, waiters/waitresses and room attendants, about the qualifications and skills needed to work in different European countries.

In the initial phase, the needs and requirements of the industry in each partner country were analysed, taking into account legal and socioeconomic differences. The analysis focused on the identification of workplaces, workers' skills and qualifications and possibilities for training. Information on language skills, rules of hygiene, reception and customer care, employment legislation and new technology was compiled, so that those seeking work in the tourist sector can identify the skills and qualifications they need in order to improve their chances of finding jobs in the respective partner countries. In this sense, a type of network was created to facilitate free movement and aid mobility in the industry.

Several modules to assist mobility were devised describing the language skills, equipment and methods, and tasks related to each job, together with data on legislation, customer relations and working conditions. Information on the employment market, training, international events and work placement opportunities was also given. In addition details of employers and organisations in the sector responsible for staff training were included. The final products were guides in German, English and French giving job descriptions, recruitment and selection procedures for cooks, waiters/waitresses and room attendants in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

This project provides job seekers with the opportunity to identify and develop new skills to increase their mobility, thereby giving them a better chance to compete in the European job market.

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EDIT

Employee development in tourism: a comparative study of policies and practices in the hotel industry (UK – 1997)

Quality in the tourism industry is crucial at a time when competition is at an all-time high. Ongoing human resources development is a high priority and employers should be encouraged to invest in this area.

The main aims of this project were to encourage policy makers and employers in the tourism and hospitality industry to improve employee training and development and adopt a lifelong approach to training for all employees under their responsibility. This is in order to increase the professionalisation and status of jobs in the tourism sector.

Edit (1997) was based on a comparative study of policies and practices in the hotel industry in the partner countries: Bulgaria, Finland, Spain and the UK. Two tourist locations were chosen in each country – one known to attract heritage tourism and business travellers, and the other a seasonal tourist resort. Interviews were carried out with managers to assess company policy and practice. Case studies of each hotel were also done focusing mainly on the employees' skills, work history and their attitude towards training and learning.

The project pointed out the good practices that could be used by policy makers, employers and human resources managers in the tourism industry. Results showed that investment in employee development and training results in the employee experiencing job satisfaction. This fosters more commitment towards the organisation, which leads to lower turnover rates and better performance. All in all the study served to show that human resource development is of the utmost importance for the tourism sector in Europe.

The products of the project include four reports on the main findings, three national reports (from Spain, Finland and the UK) and a final report which brings together and compares the results in the four countries participating in the project.

Dissemination was undertaken by each partner in all four countries. Presentations of the project were made in Italy at the Conference on Equal Opportunities in Genoa in 1998 and in South Africa at the International Hotel and Restaurant Association World Congress in 1999, where copies of the comparative report were distributed to the delegates from around the world. The report is still available on the association's web site (http://www.ih-ra.com/events). This report was used at the association's human resource management forum meetings and is available at the association's headquarters in Paris and at the Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick.

Furthermore, Dr Sinikka Vanhala uses themes from the project during seminars at the Helsinki School of Management and Economics. Dr Lina Anastassova uses material from the project in seminars for tourism management students at Bourgas Free University, Bulgaria. Professor Kate Purcell uses the project findings in her teaching of MBA and other master's degree students at Bristol School. Mia-Riitta Kivinen, who was a research associate on the Finnish study uses the EDIT research in her HRM consultancy and is doing a dissertation based on the EDIT data (cf. http://hkkk.fi/organisaatiot/research/programs/hrm/hrm.htm#Researchprojects). Researchers at CIREM in Spain and IER and ESRU in the UK did research work based on the EDIT project.

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Refalt

European training network for work-linked training in the tourism and leisure industry

(France – 1996)

Those working in the tourism sector, especially seasonal workers, often find they are not sufficiently trained for their specific jobs. Tourist companies who wish to compete and be successful in this service industry need to give adequate training to their staff, perhaps during off-season periods, not only to improve their staff's career prospects but also to increase their own competitiveness in the sector.

With this idea in mind the partners in this project, Spain, France and the Netherlands, created a pilot transnational training programme known as MALTE (management of animation in leisure and tourism in Europe) and a skills-measuring system leading to the establishment of new job profiles. These new profiles are excursions manager, mini-club manager, baby-club manager, reception manager, entertainment coordinator and sports coordinator.

The MALTE training programme consists of three main modules, namely, an entertainment module, a management module and business environment module, at the end of which the candidate should be able to develop a leisure programme for private companies or local authorities. Candidates also learn to organise and manage a project inside a company. Project products include a booklet showing skill requirements and standards for the various trades, and software skills assessment tools. This software is in the form of a knowledge tree, which provides a visual representation of available skills within a company.

The partners in this project took an active part in the dissemination of the project. Conferences and seminars were organised where information on the MALTE training programme was distributed.

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Simulturismo

Development of methods and materials for the improvement of initial and continuing training in the tourism and catering sector (Italy – 1996)

The aim of this project was to develop methods and didactic materials to improve the quality of ongoing vocational training in the tourist sector and to instil the idea of innovation into training methods. Another objective was the development of quality and safety within tourist establishments, as well as the promotion of mobility in the European tourism sector workforce. This was to be carried out through the Europe-wide dissemination of training models focusing mainly on the development of training modules that offer hands-on, practical training (the 'Educational Simulimpresa' method).

The partnership, directed by the project committee, worked in close collaboration to develop the methods and didactic materials. The partner countries, Spain, France, Italy and Portugal, were responsible for the dissemination of the project in various training and social organisations. The results of the project were analysed in different articles and reviews, including *Espace*, *Courrier du Tourisme* and *Toleie*. Two conferences were organised, one in Bologna in December 1999 and one in Rimini in March 1999. A CD-ROM and an Internet site were also produced.

The products deriving from this project are a distance-learning programme, and an operating guide for tutors on quality of service and safety in tourist enterprises, in keeping with national and EU standards. Another product is a basic training module leading to professional qualifications to be used by hotels and travel agencies. Two training units for ongoing training on 'The sale of incentive packages in travel agencies' and 'Management of reception services for customers benefiting from incentives in hotel structures' were also developed.

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12

Tourit

Survey and action research in information and communication technology in tourism and hospitality management (UK – 1997)

The project was aimed at SMEs, decision and policy-making organisations, and those providing training and technology in the field of tourism and hospitality services. It sought to determine the extent to which small and medium-sized enterprises used different information and communication technologies in their businesses, their plans to develop IT usage, and staff training needs arising from the introduction of such technology. The survey hoped to encourage increased competitiveness for SMEs in the tourism sector by raising their awareness of the potential of new communication technologies and appropriate staff training.

The basis for the project was a transnational comparative survey. A standard questionnaire was sent to 4 500 SMEs in London (UK), Aragon (Spain) and the Netherlands. From the 900 SMEs that answered, 33 were selected across the three partner countries as case studies for a more in-depth analysis. Questions were set according to the different local markets, the type of organisation, and cultural and organisational differences. Library and online searches were also part of the project.

The results of this survey showed that online information and reservation are important factors in attracting a wide tourist population. Tourist promotion and destination marketing are prime factors in ICT usage. Tourist establishments can be linked to central destination marketing/management systems and accommodation/ reservation operators. Web sites are also important tools because of their speed and user-friendly qualities. The survey also found that there is a close relationship between a web site's user-friendliness and credit card use for online reservations. This facility increases competitiveness.

The products from this project include a database of the SMEs participating in this project, the survey data and summary and the case studies. The products are presented in three languages – Spanish, English and Dutch. An additional product is a document in English entitled 'Information and communication technologies in tourism 1999'.

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Verena

Regional culture and nature – Training for tourist guides in the context of regional cultural development (Austria – 1996)

The partner regions in this project, namely the Pyhrn Eisenwurzen region in Austria, the Limousin region in France and the Oberharz region in Germany, came together to produce a project concentrating on a form of tourism where the tourist is given not only general information about a region, but also information on its cultural and environmental aspects. This project was geared towards the creation of new jobs in the tourism sector, with a training programme to promote the employability of the main target group, adults without specific formal vocational training and the unemployed. The training programme was also designed for qualified tourist guides to help them develop additional communication skills. Another aim of the project was to attract more people from the three partner regions to become tourist guides, as there is a consistent demand for such qualified personnel by tourist organisations. An important aspect of the project is that participants are awarded a certificate upon completion of the training programme.

The curriculum and the training materials were produced in German and French with a common layout, but the regional differences of the partner countries were also taken into account. The final products are a handbook containing results and process evaluations, a curriculum outline and training modules. All products are in print form and the handbook is also available on diskette.

A workshop was held in upper Austria towards the end of the project. The promoter successfully applied for a multiplier project – Verena II – after the 1999 Leonardo da Vinci call for projects. Its aim was to focus on other regions where the training programme could be applied, especially those regions with economic growth potential. Verena II was to facilitate the transfer of the Verena I results into regions where the combination of culture and nature provide a good mix for tourism. Some of the participants in the pilot courses have already had the opportunity to practise the skills acquired while guiding tourist groups. The feedback given by the visitors has been very positive.

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WIT

Women in tourism (Greece – 1998)

Holiday accommodation in remote rural or coastal regions often takes the form of small guest houses run by women who combine this activity with family commitments. The main aim behind this project was to help women who assume full responsibility for running a small or medium-sized enterprise, despite an absence of vocational education. It is also geared towards women who wish to set up such a business. The research revealed a lack of suitable vocational training tools and certification systems for the validation of informal skills for such women working in the tourism sector. Furthermore, as regards access to training, women were found to be disadvantaged because of family commitments and the fact that some of them live in remote regions making it impossible for them to attend training courses. WIT (1998) developed a computer-based training tool for home study, tailored to the special needs of this target group. The tools developed are also suitable for group learning. The course is broken down into independent modules and can be followed in different stages. This tool is suitable for learners with a limited educational background as all modules start at a basic level. It also facilitates individual learning through the use of a personal assessment and learning plan.

A CD-ROM in Greek, English and Italian was produced. The choice of CD-ROM as a training tool is intended to introduce this target group to new technologies. A guide for trainers and users accompanies the CD-ROM. Information and training on the following topics is presented:

- My personal learning plan
- Starting up my own business
- New technology in my business
- Administrative matters
- Customer service and care
- How to make my business friendly to the environment
- Legal conditions.

An Internet chatroom for exchanging user experiences is also available. The attractive design of this multimedia tool and its clear practical presentation is very effective and helps to motivate the learner. This project has been evaluated by the Ministry of Education in Greece, and in the UK by Innovative Learning Solutions and government adult education centres.

The WIT CD-ROM was presented at several exhibitions in Cyprus, Greece and the UK, where approximately 200 copies were distributed. Copies were also distributed to the Greek Tourism Organisation and to vocational training centres in Cyprus, Greece and the UK.

This project is a useful tool to help upgrade the skills of women who want to plan and manage their tourism business more effectively. This will, in turn, improve competitiveness and the quality of tourism services in many European regions.

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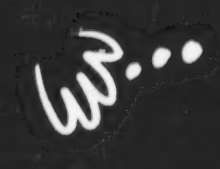

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A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet.

It can be accessed through the Europa server (http://europa.eu.int).

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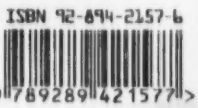

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